

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS

1. A method for opening an electronic conference by sending a request for an area to be set on a database, the request being sent to a server from a user's terminal, and the request being sent in order to hold said electronic conference using said area, the method comprising:

creating and transmitting to said server an opening request signal for setting said area;

10 receiving an opening response signal comprising opening information indicating that said area has been set in said database based on said opening request signal;

creating an invitation signal comprising said opening information contained in the opening response signal; and

15 transmitting said invitation signal to users being invited to hold said electronic conference using said area.

2. The method for opening an electronic conference according to claim 1, further comprising, creating an access request signal comprising said opening information contained in said opening response signal, in order to access said area of said database; and

transmitting said access request signal to said server.

3. The method for opening an electronic conference

according to claim 2, wherein said opening information comprises an ID for allowing said server to identify said area of said database, and the access request signal comprises said ID.

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4. The method for opening an electronic conference according to claim 1, further comprising:

obtaining said opening information contained in said invitation signal;

10 creating an access request signal comprising said opening information, in order to access said area of said database; and

transmitting said access request signal to said server.

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5. The method for opening an electronic conference according to claim 4, wherein said opening information comprises an ID for allowing said server to identify said area of said database,

20 wherein the creating the invitation signal further comprises adding said ID to said invitation signal and

wherein the creating the access signal further comprises adding said ID to said access request signal.

25 6. The method for opening an electronic conference according to claim 1, further comprising:

receiving an input of an opening message comprising

setup information for setting said area;  
storing said opening message in a storage section;  
and  
adding said setup information stored in said storage  
5 section to said invitation signal.

7. The method for opening an electronic conference  
according to claim 6, wherein said setup information  
comprises at least one of a name of said electronic  
10 conference and a code number for accessing said area of  
said database.

8. The method for opening an electronic conference  
according to claim 6, further comprising:

15 creating an access request signal comprising said  
setup information stored in said storage section in order  
to access said area of said database; and

transmitting said access request signal to said  
server.

20 9. The method for opening an electronic conference  
according to claim 8, wherein said setup information  
comprises at least one of a name of said electronic  
conference and a code number for accessing said area of  
25 said database.

10. The method for opening an electronic conference

according to claim 6, further comprising:

obtaining said setup information contained in said invitation signal;

creating an access request signal comprising said  
5 setup information, in order to access said area of said database; and

transmitting said access request signal to said server.

10 11. The method for opening an electronic conference according to claim 10, wherein said setup information comprises at least one of a name of said electronic conference and a code number for accessing said area of said database.

15 12. An apparatus for opening an electronic conference by sending a request for an area to be set on a database to a server, the request being sent in order to hold said electronic conference using this area, the apparatus  
20 comprising:

an opening request signal transmitter that creates and transmits an opening request signal for setting said area to said server,

a receiver that receives an opening response signal  
25 comprising opening information indicating that said area has been set in said database based on said opening request signal;

an invitation signal source that creates an invitation signal comprising said opening information contained in said opening request signal received by said receiver; and

5        an invitation signal transmitter that transmits said invitation signal created by said invitation signal source, to users being invited to hold said electronic conference using said area.

10       13. The apparatus for opening an electronic conference according to claim 12, further comprising an access request signal source that creates an access request signal comprising said opening information contained in said opening response signal received by said receiver, in order  
15       to access said area of said database; and

an access request signal transmitter that transmits said access request signal to said server.

14. The apparatus for opening an electronic conference  
20       according to claim 13, wherein said opening information comprises an ID for allowing said server to identify said area of said database and said access request signal source adds said ID to said access request signal.

25       15. The apparatus for opening an electronic conference according to claim 12, further comprising an opening information retriever that obtains said opening

information contained in said invitation signal;

an access request signal source that creates an  
access request signal comprising said open information  
obtained by said opening information retriever, in order  
5 to access said area of said database; and

an access request signal transmitter that transmits  
said access request signal to said server.

16. The apparatus for opening an electronic conference  
10 according to claim 15, wherein said opening information  
comprises an ID for allowing said server to identify said  
area of said database, and

wherein said invitation signal source adds said ID  
to said invitation signal and said access request signal  
15 source adds said ID to said access request signal.

17. The apparatus for opening an electronic conference  
according to claim 12, further comprising:

a message input device that receives an input of an  
20 opening message comprising setup information for setting  
said area, and

a storage that stores said opening message,  
wherein said invitation signal source adds said setup  
information stored in said storage to said invitation  
25 signal.

18. The apparatus for opening an electronic conference

according to claim 17, wherein said setup information comprises at least one of a name of said electronic conference and a code number for accessing said area of said database.

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19. The apparatus for opening an electronic conference according to claim 17, further comprising:

an access request signal source for creating an access request signal comprising said setup information stored in said storage in order to access said area of said database; and

an access request signal transmitter that transmits said access request signal to said server.

20. The apparatus for opening an electronic conference according to claim 19, wherein said setup information comprises at least one of a name of said electronic conference and a code number for accessing said area of said database.

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21. The apparatus for opening an electronic conference according to claim 17, further comprising a setup information retriever that obtains said setup information contained in said invitation signal;

an access request signal source that creates an access request signal comprising said setup information obtained by said setup information retriever, in order to

access said area of said database; and

an access request signal transmitter that transmits said access request signal to said server.

5 22. The apparatus for opening an electronic conference according to claim 17, wherein said setup information comprises at least one of a name of said electronic conference and a code number for accessing said area of said database.

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23. A recording medium having a program recorded thereon for controlling an apparatus for opening an electronic conference by sending a request for an area to be set on a database to a server, the request being sent in order  
15 to hold said electronic conference using the area, the recording medium being readable by a computer and storing a program for allowing the computer to execute:

creating and transmitting to said server an opening request signal for setting said area;

20 receiving an opening response signal comprising opening information indicating that said area has been set in said database based on said opening request signal;

creating an invitation signal comprising said opening information contained in said opening response  
25 signal; and

transmitting said invitation signal, to guests invited to said electronic conference using said area.



24. The recording medium according to 23, further comprising:

5 creating an access request signal comprising said opening information contained in said opening response signal, in order to access said area of said database; and transmitting said access request signal to said server.

10 25. The recording medium according to 24, wherein said opening information comprises an ID for allowing said server to identify said area of said database and said ID is added to said access request signal.

15 26. The recording medium according to 23, further comprising:

obtaining said opening information contained in said invitation signal;

20 creating an access request signal comprising said opening information, in order to access said area of said database; and

transmitting said access request signal to said server.

25 27. The recording medium according to 26, wherein said opening information comprises an ID for allowing said server to identify said area of said database, and

wherein said ID is added to said invitation signal,  
and adding said ID is added to said access request signal.

28. The recording medium according to 23, further  
5 comprising:

receiving an input of an opening message comprising  
setup information for setting said area;

storing said opening message in a storage section;  
and

10 adding said setup information stored in said storage  
section to said invitation signal.

29. The recording medium according to 28, wherein said  
setup information comprises at least one of a name of said  
15 electronic conference and a code number for accessing said  
area of said database.

30. The recording medium according to 28, further  
comprising:

20 creating an access request signal comprising said  
setup information stored in said storage section in order  
to access said area of said database; and

transmitting said access request signal to said  
server.

25 31. The recording medium according to 30, wherein said  
setup information comprises at least one of a name of said

electronic conference and a code number for accessing said area of said database.

32. The recording medium according to 28, further comprising:

obtaining said setup information contained in said invitation signal;

creating an access request signal comprising said setup information, in order to access said area of said database; and

transmitting said access request signal to said server.

33. The recording medium according to 32, wherein said setup information comprises at least one of a name of said electronic conference and a code number for accessing said area of said database.

34. A program for controlling an apparatus for opening an electronic conference by sending a request for an area set on a database to a server, the request being sent in order to hold said electronic conference using this area, the program allowing said computer to execute:

creating and transmitting to said server an opening request signal for setting said area;

receiving an opening response signal comprising opening information indicating that said area has been set

in said database based on said opening request signal;  
creating an invitation signal comprising said  
opening information contained in said opening response  
signal; and

- 5 transmitting said invitation signal, to users  
holding said electronic conference using said area.